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ABSTRACT

The purpose of philosophy is to aid the individual in developing a unified view of the universe, the world, and the society in which he lives. In both the establishing of life-goals and the development of a philosophy of education, a clear understanding of values and facts in necessary. But in educational practice, many decisions are based on one-sided political, social, and economical considerations rather than on philosphical ones. To gain balance and completeness, man first needs God, then the knowledge and practice provided by the humanities and by natural and social sciences. Education, according to the theistic philosophy of education, is the completing and balancing of man with divine help. Humanistic values of their broader form dominate the various schools of modern edcuational thought. But there can be no reconciliation between humanism and theism. The questions are often asked: Life for what? education for what? A structure for a theist philosophy of education and educational value system offers answers to these questions. The axiological structure for the theistic philosophy of education must be further developed into specific values, aims and educational practices. Thus the axiological approach to the theistic philosophy of education is a reasonable alternative to humanist thought. (CD)

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An Axiological Structure for a Theistic Philosophy of Education

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An Axiological Structure for a Theistic Philosophy of Education

Rudolf E. Klimes

1. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to develop a philosophical framework and value-system structure for a theistic philosophy of education and to analyze the value-system structure in the setting of a value-system structure for a humanist philosophy of education.

The study will be limited to the development of a general theistic axiological structure and no attempt will be made to present an operational system of values or a general theistic philosophy of education.

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions will be used.

According to Daley, "philosophy is the systematic study of life and the universe as a whole to frame a logical and necessary system of general ideas in terms of which every element of human experience can be interpreted."[1]

The term theism is defined by Webster's *Third New International Dictionary* as a philosophy which views "all of life as a divinely ordered sequence, the belief in the existence of one God who is viewed as a creative source of man, the world and value and who transcends and yet is immanent in the world." The fundamental concept of theism is the existence of a Being who is both the supreme Value and the Source of all finite existence.

Webster defines humanism as "a philosophy that rejects supernaturalism, regards man as a natural object, and asserts the essential dignity and worth of man and his capacity to achieve self-realization through the use of reason and scientific method." Man expresses his reality only in experiential terms. His aim is adjustment to an ever changing society by among other things, experimentation. In this study, the term will be used in this current pragmatic and experimentalistic meaning.

2. Philosophy, Philosophy of Education and Values

The purpose of philosophy is to aid the individual in developing a unified view

1 Daley, L. G., *Philosophy* (New York: College Notes Inc., 1965), p. 1.

of the universe, the world and the society in which he lives. It is to provide a framework for thinking and an understanding of the various life-goals that are available to him.

According to Brown, philosophy is not an automonous subject-matter. Philosophy is really the philosophy of science, of history, of communication or of other areas of knowledge. It has no private field of its own, it is form rather than content. But as the form of the area of knowledge it is often one with the content of the area of knowledge.[2]

Figure 1 shows the relationship of philosophy to the other areas of knowledge and study. The world surrounding the observer may be experienced physically, his vision of greatness may be experienced in totality, his community may be experienced socially. The division of knowledge into the three headings of humanities, natural sciences and social sciences and their subdivisions is somewhat arbitrary: it is understood that the areas of knowledge overlap and may be viewed from vari-

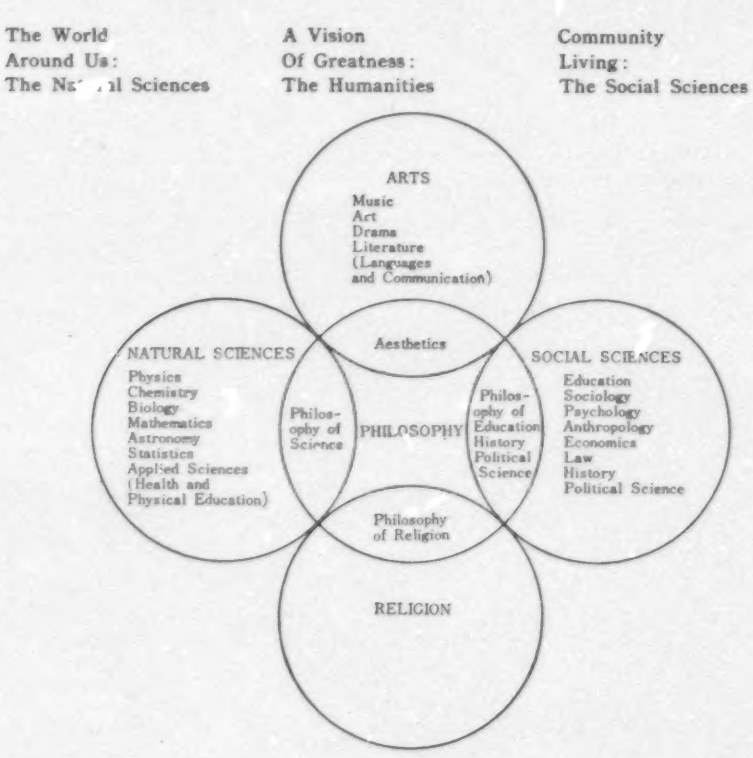

Figure 1. Philosophy and the Areas of Knowledge

2 Brown, Colin, *Philosophy and The Christian Faith* (London: Tyndale Press, 1969), p. 287.

ous aspects. Since education takes place primarily in a community setting, it is included with the social sciences. Philosophy, as a general study of life and the universe, is assigned the central and unifying position.

The purpose of the study of philosophy of education is to provide a basis for philosophical understanding of the development of educational values, objectives and plans. Further, the study of philosophy of education is to provide insight into the philosophical assumptions which underlie educational policy and practice.

Axiology as the study of the general theory of values occupies a central place in both the study of philosophy and philosophy of education. In both the establishing of life-goals and the development of a philosophy of education, a clear understanding of values and facts is necessary. Values are judgments of the worth of concepts and objects; facts are observable realities. The educator must ask himself: How does one determine the quality that is valuable? Is evaluation the result of reasoning, desire, emotion or social determination? What is the criteria for goodness?

3. Toward a Theistic Philosophy of Education

If philosophy would have a dominant effect on education, modern education must be based on the current predominant philosophy of society. But in fact, philosophy often follows educational practice rather than leads it. Much lip-service is given to educational aims which by their very nature would have to be based on a philosophy of education. But in educational practice, many decisions are based on one-sided political, social and economical considerations rather than on philosophical ones. Thus the philosophy of education, and the aims and purposes of education, lose their purposefulness and education loses its direction. It is the purpose of the writer to propose a structure and framework for a theistic philosophy of education that could serve as a basis for the development of sound educational purposes, goals and objectives.

Thomas Aquinas, one of the foremost theistic philosophers, wrote extensively about happiness and God. He analyzed the question of happiness philosophically and stated that happiness does not generally consist of honor, glory, power of any created goods but is primarily an activity of the intellectual rather than sensitive part; that is, an act of the will. He concluded that ultimate and perfect happiness lies only in the vision of the essence of God.[3]

Table 1 presents a framework for a theistic philosophy of education. Some basic questions in five fields of the philosophy of education are stated and answered.

The structure of a theistic philosophy of education is given in Figure 2. The universe is the largest unit. God as creator, recreator, and maintainer of the universe is both independent of the universe and present in the universe. Man is primarily dependent on God and secondarily dependent on the world; he is part of

3 Freeman, Eugene; Owens, Joseph. *The Wisdom and Ideas of Saint Thomas Aquinas* (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications Inc., 1968).

Table 1. A Framework for a Theistic Philosophy of Education

Area	Problem	Theistic Views
Metaphysics (Study of the nature of reality: the real and unreal)	What is the universe?	The universe proceeds according to a divine plan toward the realization of a divine purpose. The divine is the basis of all existence (idealism).
	What is life?	God directly intervened with an act of creation (creationism).
Epistemology (Study of the nature of knowledge: the true and the false).	What are the sources of knowledge?	1. Faith 2. Authority 3. Common Sense 4. Reason 5. Experience
Axiology (Study of the general theory of values)	What are values?	Values are ideas which are eternal and absolute.
	Are values found in the object or made in the mind?	Values exist as a quality in the object which call for a human judgment to recognize them. The value in the object is independent of human judgment (Axiological Objectivism).
Ethics (The study of the nature of "the good": The good and the bad).	Does good exist in the action or in the mind?	There is an objective basis for the existence of an ethical code. Good exists in the action (Objective Existence).
	What are the standards of good actions?	The will of God is the ultimate criterion by which good and bad actions are evaluated (Theologism).
Aims in Education	What is the purpose of education?	The purpose of education is to provide harmenious full development of man's physical, mental and spiritual powers for satisfying service in this life and the afterlife.

both the universe and the world. Life is sustained by God through the physical means of the world. Man, as shown in the figure by his unshaded portion, is not a complete, self-sustaining balanced entity but he is rather an incomplete, self-destroying and unbalanced being. Man as an individual is, among other things, incomplete emotionally, sexually, and spiritually. His life is not self-sustaining but dependent on electrical impulses over which he has no control. His physical body tends to chemical and physiological unbalance, his mind to exaggerations according to conditioned thought patterns. And yet within him lies a native demand to restore balance. This demand is so powerful that in the absence of balance, any illusion of balance will suffice. To gain balance and completeness, he first needs God, then the knowledge and practice provided by the humanities and natural and social sciences. Education, according to the theistic philosophy of education, is the completing and balancing of man with divine help.

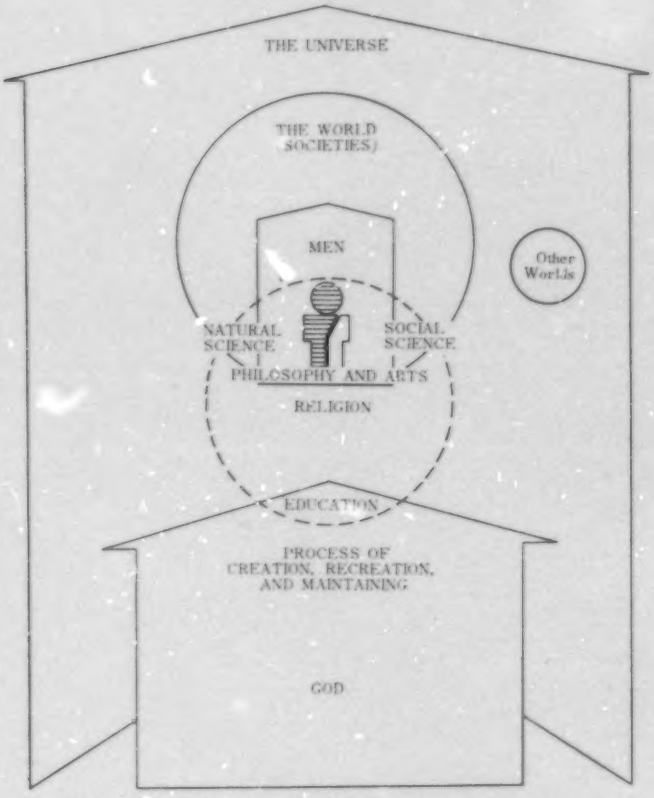

Figure 2. The Structure of a Theistic Philosophy of Education

4. A Theistic Axiological Structure in a Humanist World

Many attempts have been made to bridge theism and humanism, one of the most notable by Desiderius Erasmus. "Devoting his life to editing the texts of the New Testament and the Church Fathers and preaching what he called the philosophy of Christ, Erasmus hoped that humanist scholarship and education would be the means of bringing about a restoration of a purer form of Christianity and a new golden age in which the ethical message of the New Testament would prevail over the subtleties and confusions of theological debate. He was convinced that there was nothing incompatible between the Christian and the classical traditions and that man's political and social life could be improved by the exercise of reason and piety. Erasmus humanism died in the religious wars of the Reformation."[4]

[4] Encyclopedia Americana (New York: Americana Corporation, 1955), XIV, 488.

Table 2. Value Structures of the Theistic and Humanist Philosophies of Education

Area	Theistic Values	Humanist Values
Definition of Values	A Quality of an Object which Involves a Central Fixed Purpose and an Individual's Chosen Co-operation with That Purpose	A Quality of an Object which Involves Appreciation or Interest on the Part of an Individual
Fundamental Value	Perfection of Character	Self-realization
Contingency of Fundamental Values	Objective: Non-contingent on Other Values (Unconditional, Independent of Valuer, Preference by Value)	Subjective: Contingent on Other Values (Conditional, Dependent on Valuer, Preference by Valuer)
Ultimate Standard of Value	God (Universal Standard)	Man (Personal, Social Standard)
Origin of Values	Theology (Ideals)	Biological of Psychological (Physical) Urges That are Judged as Desires
Chief Characteristics of the Ultimate Standard of Values	The Fixed Purposefulness of the Value Standards	The Drifting and Tentativeness of the Value Standards
Classification of Fundamental Values	1. Religion 3. Logic 2. Ethics 4. Economics	1. Logic 3. Ethics 2. Economics
Orientation of Values	Progressive Values for an Endless Life: Continuing-ends	Immediate-ends Oriented Values (Finality of Death)
Determination of the Relative Value of Objects	The Capacity in Meeting the Universal Standards Regarding Love, Faith, Goodness, Truth and Beauty	The Capacity in Meeting Human Desires and Needs
Historic Perspective of Values	Conservation of Values in a Changing Environment	Adapting of Values to Man in His Changing Environment
Truth and Values	Absolute Truth as Opposed to Error (Truth as a Basis for Values)	Truth Relative to the Achievement of Any Set Purpose (Truth as a Value Based on Practice and Knowledge)
Discipline as a Value	Self-discipline	Self-satisfaction
Change and Value	Change as Growth Toward a Perfect Standard	Value in Growth for Growth's Sake, Variety for Variety's Sake
The Nature of Man	Man Inherently Evil, Incapable of Unaided Self-change Toward Good	Man Inherently Good, Capable of Self-development
Educational Emphasis	Patterns, Structure, Experience	Experience
Curriculum	Basic Curriculum Prescribed, Some Electives (Basic Curriculum has Value Independent of Student Preference)	Individualized, Electives (Determination of Value up to the Individual)
Criteria for Evaluation	Harmonious Growth	Client's Satisfaction

Margolis concluded a study on *Values and Conduct* by stating that: "if talk of deities and afterlife is nothing more than a projection of the hopes and fears of men, then the overriding values of human existence concern the exploration and use of the personal lives of each of us.....it is quite impossible that anyone can pretend with any justification at all to formulate, as a confirmable truth, what the good life for man is.....it is always arbitrary to impose some vision of the good life upon a community of men."[5] In theism, that good life is ultimately defined as life in harmony with God's will. His will however, is not imposed upon any community but rather offered to individuals to be freely accepted or freely rejected. In order to maintain some sort of order, someone must be the final basis of that order: either God or man. Morgolis' statement points out the incompatibility between theism and humanism; there can be no conciliation between the two.

Table 2 presents the value structures of the theistic and humanist philosophies of education. Humanist values are presented only as a setting and point of contrast for theistic education. The areas outlined are selected fields in axiology and education.

Theistic values are not generally authoritarian, they are rather purpose-directed

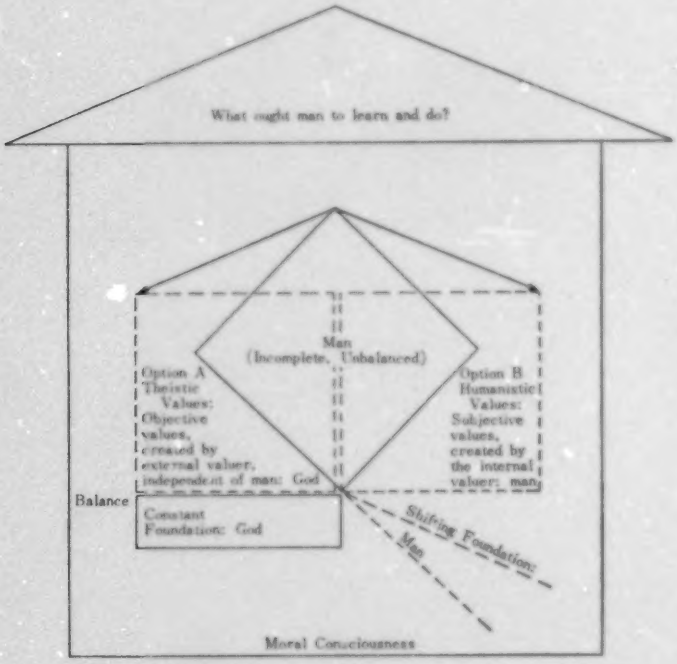

Figure 3. Objectivity of Educational Values

5 Margolis, Joseph, *Values and Conduct* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 208.

to the achievement of freely chosen human goals in the light of God's plan. Theistic thinkers value consultation with program participants and democratic decision-making. But if the differentiation is between God or man as the ultimate standard of value and therefore authority, then theism prefers God's final authority to man's. Further, theistic values are not synonomous with scholastic ones for they show great concern for free choice, experience, harmonious development and human relations.

Humanist values in their broader form dominate the various schools of modern educational thought. They form the basis for modern culture and as such the foundation for most current research in the various areas of knowledge.

Figure 3 shows a diagram on the objectivity of educational values. Two options, option A and B are presented. Objective values under option A are presented to be based on a constant foundation, subjective values under option B on a shifting foundation. The theistic philosophy of education considers fundamental values as objective.

5. Value Structures in Education

Value structures do not relate directly to the program of education; they form one step in the planning process that includes philosophy, philosophy of education, value system, educational purpose, long-range goals, program objectives, present educational status, projection of educational resourses and planning assumptions. All aspects of education have philosophical implications which cannot be taken for granted. Only as these implications are carefully examined and related to the educational aims, will educational practice be based on sound foundations. Often there are wide discrepencies between the stated philosophy of education, stated aims and the actual practice of education.

In order to relate the philosophy of education to educational practice, a system of aim-classification is essential. The two following systems may serve as an acceptable basis in the development of classifications for theistic education.

Gross and Grambsch classified educational goals as output goals (student-expressive, student-instrumental, research, direct service) and support goals (adaption of institution to environment, management, motivation and position maintenance).[6]

The *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* classified educational objectives into the cognitive domain of knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation and the affective domain of perceiving, responding, valuing, organizing and characterizing by a value or value complex.[7]

6 Gross, Edward; Grambsch, Paul V., *University Goals and Academic Power* (Washington: American Council on Education, 1968), pp. 13-16.

7 Bloom, Benjamin S., Editor. *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, Handbook I: Cognitive Domain* (New York: David McKay Company, 1956).

Krathwohl, D. R.; Bloom, B. S.; Masia, B. B., *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, Handbook II: Affective Domain* (New York: David Mckay Company, 1964)

Since educational aims serve on many varied levels and in many varied areas, a specific system of aim-classification for each level and area of theistic education will be essential. The aims-classification system itself influences the aims and thus must be developed on the basis of the controlling philosophy of education.

The question is often asked: Life for what? Education for what? To give an ultimate meaning to the question, the writer has presented a structure for a theist philosophy of education and educational value system. The axiological structure for the theistic philosophy of education must be further developed into specific values, aims and educational practices. Thus the axiological approach to the theistic philosophy of education is presented as a reasonable alternative to humanist thought.